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UNCLAS HELSINKI 000924

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [NL](#) [SW](#) [FI](#) [KG](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: FINNISH EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF UZBEK REFUGEES IN KYRGYZSTAN

REF: A. STATE 1531333

[B.](#) STOCKHOLM 1498

[C.](#) BISHTEK 1194

[D.](#) SCHLAEFER/THOME-EUR/NB E-MAILS 22-24 AUG 05

[¶1.](#) (SBU) PolChief met August 24 with MFA Human Rights Unit Director Johanna Suurpaa and Legal Officer Janina Hasenson to request additional assurances regarding the 15 Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan. Both reiterated their office's willingness to draft a note to Kyrgyz authorities in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Ref A. However, they highlighted minor problems that might delay slightly the note's delivery.

First, Finnish refugee resettlement law, like that of many countries, does not permit the granting of refugee status without a UNHCR determination. The MFA's legal office is already working with the Human Rights Unit to find a compromise on suitable language, but this may take a few days. Second, Finland intends to consult with the Netherlands and Sweden on both the language and the form of communication before delivering anything to the Kyrgyz procurator general. Finally, they said, Finland's non-resident ambassador was seeking clarifications from the Kyrgyz MFA regarding the issue.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) Suurpaa suggested that there was some hope that Kyrgyz authorities might simply relent and release the 15 Uzbeks to UNHCR, based on previous assurances and in response to the pressure currently being applied by UNHCR, the U.S. and the resettlement countries. If not, however, she and Hasenson expressed confidence that Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands would eventually come up with an adequate joint response that would serve to secure the Uzbeks' release.

MACK